

**From:** [Doug Auclair](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Opposition to user fees  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 2:16:09 PM

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Dear Members of the Salem City Council,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed aircraft landing and parking fees at the Salem Municipal Airport. As the owner of a flight school and a strong advocate for general aviation, I believe these fees would have unintended negative consequences for the airport, the local aviation community, and the broader economic ecosystem of Salem.

While I understand the need to address budgetary concerns, implementing user fees risks diminishing the accessibility of the airport for small operators, student pilots, and aviation enthusiasts. General aviation airports like Salem play a vital role in fostering pilot training, supporting small businesses, and contributing to regional economic development. By introducing new financial barriers, the city could inadvertently discourage use of the airport, thereby reducing the overall traffic and activity that sustains its operations.

In particular, these fees could disproportionately impact smaller operators and student pilots, for whom aviation is already a significant financial commitment. Many flight schools, including mine, operate on narrow margins while providing essential training to the next generation of aviators. For students training on smaller aircraft, landing and parking fees could be a deciding factor in their choice of training location, diverting activity away from Salem Airport to fee-free or lower-cost facilities.

Furthermore, the long-term consequences of reduced traffic at the airport must be carefully considered. A decrease in usage could lead to reduced fuel sales, fewer local businesses supporting airport operations, and diminished support from the aviation community. This would undermine the very purpose of the fees, creating a negative feedback loop that exacerbates financial strain rather than alleviating it.

I urge the City Council to explore alternative funding mechanisms that do not discourage general aviation activity. For example, partnerships with local businesses, targeted federal grants, or reallocation of existing municipal funds could provide sustainable solutions without imposing new financial burdens on airport users. General aviation is an asset to Salem, and its contributions to the community far outweigh the modest revenue that user fees might generate.

Thank you for considering this perspective as you deliberate on this important issue. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the critical role of general aviation and collaborate on finding viable alternatives to support the airports budget.

Sincerely,

Doug Auclair

Owner, Air Ventures Flying School

**From:** [Jason McDowell](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Airport User Fee Proposal  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 2:13:49 PM

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Hello,

I'm writing to express my opposition to introducing user fees for users of the airport in general, and the unfair targeting of experimental and training aircraft in particular.

User fees in general serve only to stifle airport use for comparatively little financial gain. The effect is no different than if the city were to introduce an arbitrary toll on the main highways into town, driving away visitors in cars and stifling growth just to make a few bucks.

Similarly, introducing arbitrary user fees "because we can" will have a significant impact on employers at the airfield as their customers and potential customers are given a financial incentive to take their business elsewhere.

The proposed change clearly demonstrates a lack of knowledge regarding aviation. Although the gross weight exemption has been increased from 5000 lbs to 7000 lbs, there is still no exception for training or experimental aircraft, introducing yet another roadblock to some of the key users of the airfield.

Please reconsider airport user fees altogether. They're entirely arbitrary, and virtually all similarly-sized airports across the country have employed knowledge and management acumen to meet their own budgets without having to resort to such a lazy, uninformed solution.

Jason McDowell

**From:** [John L. Poole](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Letter For Agenda 7.1a for 1/27/2025 Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 4:22:19 PM  
**Attachments:** [Letter\\_CitySalem\\_Jan\\_27\\_2025\\_1618.pdf](#)

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RRR

Sent No later than 4:45 PM

Re: Agenda 7.1a. First Reading ordinance Bill No. 1-25 to amend SRC Chapter 9 to modify the collection of aircraft landing fees and overnight parking fees.

Dear Mister/Madam City Recorder,

Attached as file Letter\_CitySalem\_Jan\_27\_2025\_1618.pdf, please find the 3 page PDF letter to the council regarding the above matter Please add this letter to the record.

Please confirm receipt of this email and the PDF either by acknowledging the Return Receipt Request protocol and/or by reply email. Thank you.

Cordially,

John Poole

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John Laurence Poole  
1566 Court ST NE  
Salem OR 97301-4241

John L. Poole  
1566 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301-4241  
(707) 812-1323 [jlpoole56@gmail.com](mailto:jlpoole56@gmail.com)

Monday,  
January 27, 2025

**Re:** Agenda 7.1a. First Reading ordinance Bill No. 1-25 to amend SRC Chapter 9 to modify the collection of aircraft landing fees and overnight parking fees.

**Hearing Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 6:00 PM

BY EMAIL ONLY: [cityrecorder@cityofsalem.net](mailto:cityrecorder@cityofsalem.net) “5:00 p.m., or earlier, on the day of the meeting”, cc:

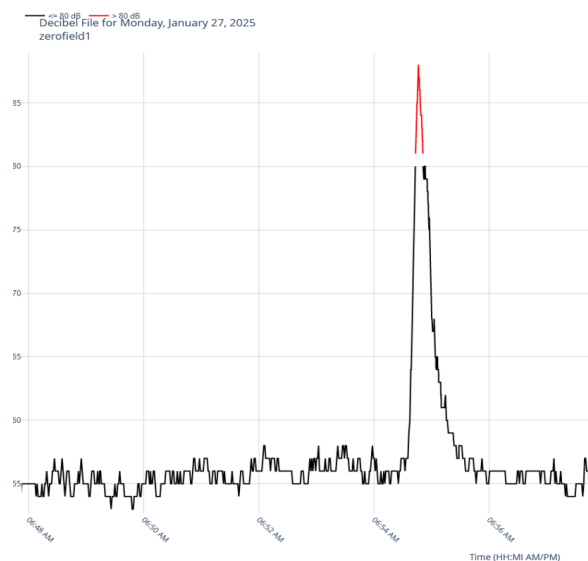
RRR

Dear Mayor Hoy and Members of the Salem City Council,

This morning, Monday, January 27, 2025, at 6:17 AM a Learjet (N331US) flew into Salem from Hillsboro, OR, causing a jump of background noise from an ambient 53 decibels to 66 decibels.

Then at 6:54 AM, the same Learjet took off from Salem and caused an **88 decibel** noise level from an ambient 56 dB-A. This loud noise awakened me. You may view the partial decibel log at: [https://flightmonitor.org/cases/20250127/decibels\\_zerofield1\\_Jan\\_27\\_2025\\_To\\_0755.html](https://flightmonitor.org/cases/20250127/decibels_zerofield1_Jan_27_2025_To_0755.html)

Here’s a screenshot of the log for the 2<sup>nd</sup> disturbance:



*Figure 1: Learjet 88 decibel Disturbance at  
1566 Court Street NE*

Recall I wrote you previously on April 24, 2024, at 2:49 PM, about a Learjet that performed a flyby over downtown Salem during the Wednesday noon hour and flew as low as 175 feet above ground in a highly populated area. It remains my opinion that was an extremely reckless and dangerous flight and never should have happened. Your response was that yes, Learjets are loud and to contact the FAA. That incident created at my property a noise of 92 dB-A.

Here's is a screenshot showing today's flight path to and from KSLE of N331US.

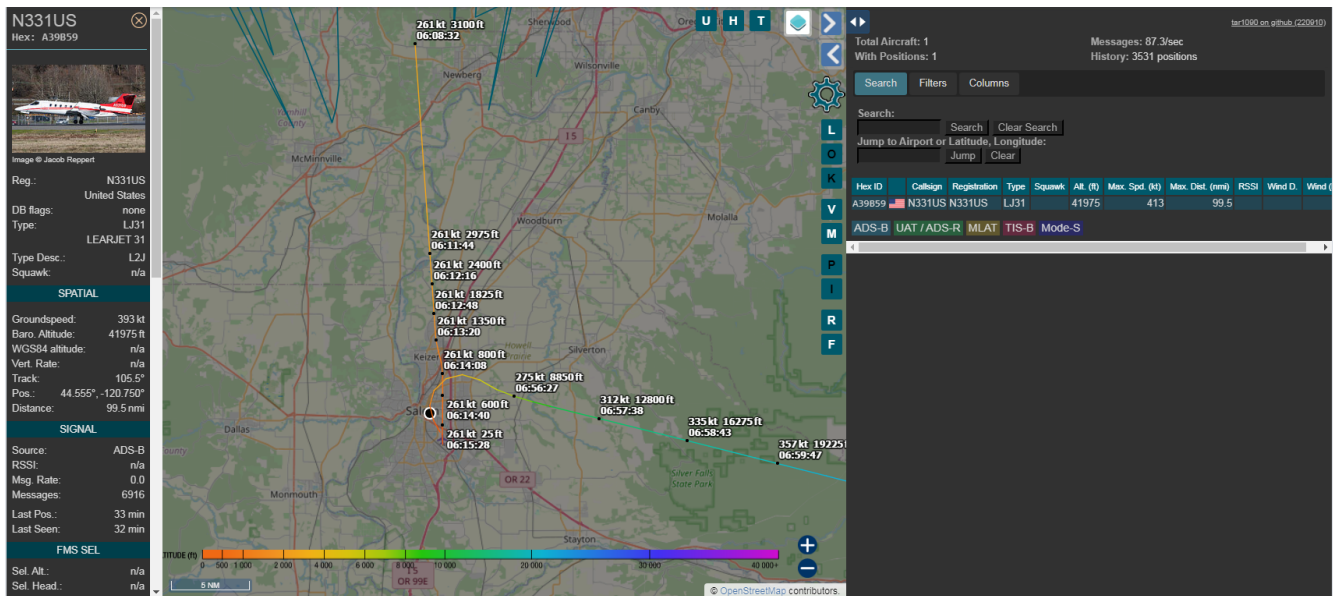


Figure 2: Flight Path of N331US for 1/27/2025

The Salem tower is not staffed until 7:00 a.m. How are you going to document and assess fees to aircraft which land outside of the air traffic controller's hours? What steps are you taking to minimize the impacts of jets flying over residential neighborhoods and creating noise? What in the current draft will discourage jets from coming to Salem outside of *air traffic control hours* to fuel up? Have you considered have limited hours of operation for civilian aircraft? What about having the fueling company providing details of purchases that are outside of the air traffic controller hours? I am assuming the City will be relying on the air traffic controller's records to document landings.

What is the City doing to monitor and assess noise level in residential areas? Especially noises that are during universally accepted "quite times", e.g. before 7:00 a.m. and after 10:00 p.m.?

The Staff Report for this matter has:

Once the technology is in place to capture this information, staff will monitor and analyze aircraft landing data, revenue, and feedback from airport users to determine if future adjustments to the program are warranted

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What is the “technology” staff plans to implement? How will staff monitor and analyze landings? I think these broad terms should be spelled out and defined so it’s clear that the implementation will achieve the desired result.

Sincerely,

/s/John L. Poole

/s/ Joan Lloyd,1615 Court Street NE

**From:** [Mike Rhodes](#)  
**To:** [Salem Airport](#); [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** SLE Landing fees  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 1:43:42 PM

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I have regularly flown to SLE for breakfast or lunch at the Flightdeck.  
I have never bought fuel at SLE because the price there is outrageously higher than surrounding airports.

If you impose landing fees and/or use ADS/B to impose fees, I will never land back at SLE! NEVER!

Mike Rhodes  
Independence, OR

Sent from my iPad



**From:** [Hannah McLaughlin](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#); [Salem Airport](#)  
**Subject:** Salem Airport Landing Fee Opposition  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 10:22:18 AM

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Good afternoon,

My name is Hannah McLaughlin. I am a tenant at the Salem Airport, and am also employed by Aerometal International, Inc., a company up in Aurora that would be negatively impacted by the proposed fees.

At the special AAC meeting to propose fees back in December, it was noted that the airport operates at about a \$600,000 deficit per year. It was pointed out that federally funded airports have a requirement to be as profitable as possible, and the following proposals were discussed:

- Landing fees
- Overnight fees
- Non-aeronautical use

I will first address the landing fees. The proposed fees would be \$3/1000lb of gross weight for any aircraft over 7000lb (an increase from the proposed 5000lb) The implementation of landing fees concerns me for a number of reasons. I find it concerning that the City would pay a yet unknown amount of money to bring in a company to set up cameras and ADS-B monitoring to collect these fees, when the airport is already operating at a deficit. It also concerns me that the City would consider using ADS-B data when 1. not all aircraft are legally required to have ADS-B installed and 2. This was never the intent of the ADS-B mandate. Many pilots were opposed to the ADS-B mandate initially due to the potential of that data being used for landing fees. I would encourage the City to look at the backlash that implementing ADS-B based fees has incurred at airports like Oak Harbor and Kissimmee. The [AOPA wrote a letter dated September 12, 2024](#) opposing the use of ADS-B data for fees, and is actively advocating for legislation prohibiting such a use.

I work on large vintage aircraft, the Douglas DC-3, and we often provide flight training and crew currency in our aircraft. Salem is a favorite airport of our instructors because of the instrument approaches, it being less busy than other local airports, and the restaurant. They also buy fuel from the FBO. The DC-3 can be operated at several different gross weights, but for simplicity's sake, let's say we are operating at 26,900lb (rounded up to 27000.) That is an additional \$81/landing. If we are doing a currency flight, we are likely doing 5-6 landings, which is \$400-500 on an airplane that already costs \$1900/hr to operate, with a bill we would not get until weeks later. We cannot justify this cost increase to our students or the owners of the aircraft we manage.

At the special AAC meeting, the members felt that they would not be losing any operators with this fee structure. I am telling you, as an employee of Aerometal, that we will not be able to bring our students to the Salem Airport if this fee structure is introduced without exceptions for things like flight training or fuel purchase. When the

DC-3s purchase fuel at Salem it is usually hundreds or thousands of dollars worth of 100LL. I got my job at Aerometal based on networking I was doing when the DC-3s came in for training, which will not be a possibility for other young mechanics if the DC-3s no longer come to Salem. It saddens me that if these fees are implemented, when I go to get type rated in the DC-3, I won't be able to do training at my home airport, that I am a tenant at, as I will not be able to afford the additional cost per hour that this fee schedule would introduce.

The airport manager has also stated that for aircraft that can operate at multiple gross weights (like the DC-3) that they will initially be charged at the highest gross weight, and that the burden is on the owner to prove the aircraft is operating at a lower gross weight. While the DC-3s in Aerometal's care have letters of explanation on board for whatever gross weight they are operating at, many operators of other aircraft do not have this.

I am also concerned about the precedent this sets. When the weight increase to 7000lb was proposed, Councilor Nishioka stated that if the Council felt that 7000lb was not bringing in enough revenue, that they would again lower the weight to 5000lb. What happens when these fees push operators out? What is stopping the City from implementing fees for lower gross weight aircraft to make up for this? How long until everyone is paying a fee, and as a result, nobody is flying to Salem? It is a slippery slope, and will be damaging to the airport long term.

It was pointed out that if there is a negative impact, that the fees can change. Respectfully, this is not how the aviation industry works. Once an airport has a reputation, it takes a long time for that reputation to change. I have spoken with several local area pilots who, if any fees are implemented, will avoid the airport on principle. The owners of our DC-3s often have other, smaller aircraft in their collections, and they too will no longer visit Salem in their other aircraft. Another sticking point is the way fees are being implemented. Aviation runs on an honor system. If I were flying my aircraft, paid the FBO fee, and then weeks later got a bill in the mail for landing fees, that would be a great way to insure that I did not land at that airport again.

I would propose the following for landing fees at the Salem Airport, if they need to be implemented:

- Any aircraft requiring a type rating. This would include all turbo-jet powered aircraft, capturing the lighter weight jets that the City is worried about missing with a higher weight limit. This would also include any aircraft with a gross weight of over 12500lb.
- Any aircraft operating as an air carrier - this would capture UPS and FedEx, as previously mentioned at the special AAC meeting.

I would propose the following exceptions:

- Flight training - this would allow companies like Aerometal to continue to bring business to the airport.

- Experimental/Limited category aircraft. This would be a very small number of aircraft, and I would propose that this exemption be considered regardless of what (if any) weight of aircraft is chosen, as operators of aircraft in these categories cannot, unless operating on a waiver, recoup any costs.

I would also propose that the City allow the FBO to collect landing fees, as opposed to bringing in an outside company. Jet aircraft are generally landing during operating hours of the FBO or are generating a Call-out for services.

Overnight fees are another thing. The City could double the current overnight fees and still be within average. I would propose that for after-hours General Aviation arrivals, a dropbox be put out for pilots to pay cash, in addition to an option to pay at the FBO. I have been to a number of airports that have honor system overnight fees, and pilots are more than happy to pay. Again, look at Oak Harbor and the backlash they're facing for how they implemented fees. Just last week, I was on field after hours and someone came up to me and asked where the dropbox for the overnight fee was, as the FBO was closed and they were leaving early the next morning. We don't have a drop box, so they weren't able to pay. Here is the perfect example of someone trying to do the right thing.

I would propose that the City double their current overnight fees, set out a dropbox for overnight payments, and waive these fees with a minimum fuel purchase - 10 gallons is industry standard for light aircraft. I would also propose that if an aircraft is staying for more than 3 nights, a long term fee structure be introduced providing a slight discount.

I believe it was Councilor Nishioka who brought up fuel flowage fees, and asked why the airport does not generate more revenue there. The answer is simple: cost. Self-serve 100LL is \$6.60/gallon at Salem. it's \$7.15 for full service. Comparatively, Twin Oaks, a short, 20 minute flight away, is \$5.50/gallon, over a dollar cheaper. Albany is \$5.99, as is Lebanon. To the south, Medford, which is a busier commercial use airport, is \$5.41 for self serve. When I fill my airplane, I'm only putting 20-25 gallons in at a time (often less) and while an additional \$20/tank sucks, but is doable, and I like to support our local FBO. But there are many tenants on the airport who are retired and on a fixed income, or who are learning to fly and can't afford the additional cost, especially when that aircraft may hold 80+ gallons. When you have tenants on your airport who are flying to other airports for fuel because it makes more sense financially, then that is a problem. I would encourage the City to look at ways to lower fuel costs as much as possible - realizing, of course, that a profit does have to be made and that costs vary by fuel load.

I would propose the following: Once a month during flying season (lets say April-October) once a month, offer a fuel discount. Propose a partnership with the restaurant for a Pilot Special, or the B-17 Alliance when they host events. Pilots are always looking for an excuse to fly, and food and cheaper gas are reasons I myself have flown. Other airports have done this successfully. During the early months of COVID, when Chehalis had exceptionally cheap AvGas, pilots flew in from hundreds of miles around for lunch and cheap fuel.

The last point brought up was non-aeronautical use. Respectfully, I disagree that this is a necessity. There is a huge need nation-wide for hangar space. We have a waitlist for the Salem airport, and a number of hangars that are already non-aeronautical use against federal guidelines. Has the City looked into putting up city-owned portable hangars (like the green T-hangars on the south end?) Many people are hesitant to build on the Salem Airport because while you own the building, you lease the land, and that puts people off of investing in the airport. City-owned hangars, however, are common, and aircraft owners are more likely to accept this risk over the risk of losing their owner-built hangar or getting priced out at the end of their lease. If the City could offer competitive hangar rates, people would move from other airports to hangar at Salem. A T-hangar at Aurora State is upwards of \$5-600/month right now, and people are desperate for more reasonably priced hangar space in the area. The City could greatly benefit in this area if this was done correctly.

I would also be interested to see where it is that the airport is losing money every year. Tenants on the airport have historically felt unrepresented with the City Council, and we would all love to see where money is being spent (and lost) on the airport.

The airport receives federal funding every year, but has the City looked into state funding? Siletz Bay airport got just over a million dollars in 2023-24, and has much less to offer in terms of services than Salem does. Should the City be applying for more state funds?

I am not against airport fees, and believe they can be very beneficial to an airport. But the fees have to be implemented in a way that doesn't upset the already fragile airport ecosystem. Salem is not a busy airport. It is not Dallas Love. There is not enough traffic that fees on smaller aircraft are going to make a big difference, and certainly not \$600k worth. Pilots are happy to pay reasonable fees. But the proposed fee structure, paying for a company to come in and set up monitoring, with late billing, does not inspire any sort of confidence in the City by airport residents. Fees need to be published, need to be reasonable, and need to be charged at the time, not weeks later.

Salem is already struggling. If you want to bring in more air traffic, you have to make the airport more appealing, and making it more expensive to land here is not going to make it more appealing. I would strongly encourage the City Council to review the above proposals, and I am happy to speak with any Councilor about any questions or concerns that either the City or local pilots have.

Thank you,  
Hannah  
(971) 599-8896